WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for exchanging information between entities on a network comprising:

identifying a plurality of data elements capable of being instantiated by a plurality of applications on the network and to which global annotations may be anchored;

providing one or more interfaces for creating global annotations anchored to a selected one or more of the identified data elements; and

providing one or more interfaces for viewing, from one or more applications, the global annotations.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more interfaces for creating global annotations comprises at least one application for creating graphical user interfaces.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein:

a first one of the interfaces for creating global annotations is accessible from a first application capable of instantiating identified data elements in a first type of document; and

a first one of the interfaces for viewing the global annotations is accessible from a second application capable of instantiating identified data elements in a second type of document different than the first type of document.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein at least one of the first and second applications comprise a data analysis application.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein at least one of the first and second applications comprise a text editor.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising adding entries to a registry for each of the identified data element.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein providing the one or more interfaces for viewing, from at least the second application, global annotations created from the first application comprises:

parsing data loaded by the second application into discrete data elements; and

searching the registry for entries corresponding to the discrete data elements.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein providing one or more interfaces for creating global annotations anchored to selected annotatable data elements from at least the first application comprises:

selecting an annotation structure associated with a selected annotatable data element; and

generating a graphical user interface based on the selected annotation structure.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

allowing a user to view details regarding the context in which a global annotation was created.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein allowing a user to view details regarding the context in which the global annotation was created comprises providing a link to a document containing a data element to which the global annotation is anchored.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein identifying the plurality of data elements comprises identifying categories of data elements to which global annotations may be anchored.

12. A method for creating global annotations, comprising:

loading a first set of data with a first application;

identifying one or more data elements contained in the first set of data to which global annotations can be anchored;

providing an interface allowing a user to create a global annotation for a selected one of the identified data elements; and

storing a global annotation created via the interface in an annotation store, wherein the global annotation is anchored to the selected data element.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising providing an interface allowing a user to view the global annotation from within a second application loading a second set of data containing the selected data element for which the global annotation was created.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the global annotation is anchored to the selected data element via association with a global identifier generated for the selected data object.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein identifying one or more data elements in the loaded data to which global annotations can be anchored comprises:

parsing the loaded data into parsed data elements; and

searching a registry of annotatable data elements for matches to the parsed data elements.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein parsing the loaded data into parsed data elements comprises applying a hashing function to portions of the loaded data.

17. The method of claim 12, further comprising highlighting, in the loaded data, the identified data elements to which global annotations can be anchored.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein:

the identified data elements comprise data elements from different categories; and

the highlighting comprises highlighting data elements from different categories with different colors.

19. The method of claim 12, further comprising storing contextual information related to a context in which the global annotation is created.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the contextual information comprises an indication of the loaded data containing the selected data element to which the global annotation is anchored.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the contextual information comprises a link to a document containing the selected data element to which the global annotation is anchored.

22. A method for viewing global annotations, comprising:

loading a first set of data with a first application;

identifying one or more data elements in the first set of data to which global annotations have be anchored;

providing an indication of the identified data elements; and

providing an interface, accessible from the first application, allowing a user to view a global annotation for a selected one of the identified data elements.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein:

providing an indication of the identified data elements comprises displaying an icon proximate the identified data elements; and

the interface is accessible by selecting the icon.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein at least one of the global annotations was previously created from a second application loading a second set of data containing a data element to which the at least one global annotation is anchored.

25. A computer-readable medium containing an executable component for exchanging information between entities on a network which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:

identifying data elements capable of being manipulated by a plurality of applications on the network and to which global annotations may be anchored;

providing one or more graphical user interfaces for creating global annotations anchored to a selected one or more of the identified data elements from at least a first one of the applications; and

providing one or more graphical user interfaces for viewing, from at least a second application, global annotations created from the first application.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the operations further comprise adding entries to a registry for each of the identified data element.

27. The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein providing, via the annotation management system, one or more interfaces for creating global annotations anchored to selected annotatable data elements from at least the first application comprises:

selecting an annotation structure associated with a selected annotatable data element; and

generating a graphical user interface based on the selected annotation structure.

28. A system for managing global annotations anchored to one or more different type data elements, comprising:

an annotation database for storing the global annotations;

one or more applications capable of loading data containing one or more data elements to which one or more global annotations are anchored;

a set of plug-in components, each for interfacing between one or more of the applications and an annotation server; and

an annotation server configured to receive, via the plug-in components, requests from the applications to access global annotations anchored to one or data elements instantiated by the applications.

29. The system of claim 28, further comprising a registry identifying a set of data elements to which global annotations may be anchored.

30. The system of claim 28, wherein the system allows a global annotation created from a first application to be viewed from a second application instantiating a data element to which the global annotation is anchored.